

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 07379 082002Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 A-01 PER-05 MMO-01 SSO-00
/030 W

-----002893 082008Z /14

O 081926Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3334
INFO USDOC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS CARACAS 7379

STATE FOR ARA/AND/V SERGEANT

COMMERCE FOR ITA/BED/OED/MEPD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: AFSP BEXP
SUBJECT: STAFFING OF EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION

REF: (A) STATE 197954 (B) CARACAS 202 (C) CARACAS 11476

1. IN OUR DISCUSSION WITH GARNITZ AND ZUCCA LATE IN 1977, THE CONCLUSION WAS REACHED THAT THE CONCENTRATION OF PART OF THE E/C STAFF ON MAJOR PROJECT WORK WAS WELL ADVISED AND SHOULD CONTINUE. CONTACTS FOR THIS SPECIAL KIND OF ACTIVITY HAVE BEEN LABORIOUSLY DEVELOPED IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL CENTERS OUTSIDE OF CARACAS AS WELL AS IN CARACAS ITSELF. THE WORK IS SHOWING RESULTS IN MORE TIMELY AND THOROUGH EMBASSY (AND USDOC/US BUSINESS) KNOWLEDGE OF MAJOR PROJECTS, BETTER UNDERSTANDING AMONG VENEZUELAN BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF WHAT U.S. COMPANIES HAVE TO OFFER, AND MORE AWARENESS AMONG U.S. COMPANIES OF OPPORTUNITIES IN VENEZUELA.

2. THE DETERMINATION WAS MADE DURING THE ZUCCA/GARNITZ VISIT THAT
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IF THE COMMERCIAL TASK FORCE WAS TERMINATED AND IF A REDUCTION IN EMBASSY PERSONNEL WORKING ON MAJOR PROJECTS HAD TO BE MADE, THE MINIMUM VIABLE GROUP TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EARLIER EFFORTS AND HANDLE THE ANTICIPATED WORK LOAD WOULD BE TWO OFFICERS, A SECRETARY AND A LOCAL SPECIALIST. THIS WAS THE POSITION TAKEN BY AMBASSADOR VAKY IN REFTEL B WHICH WE REAFFIRM NOW. ACCORDING TO REFTEL (A), THE

REDUCTION NOW CONTEMPLATED WOULD LEAVE ONLY ONE OFFICER. THIS WOULD FORCE A DRASTIC REDUCTION IN THE EMBASSY'S MAJOR EXPORT PROJECT WORK, REDUCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE BASIC WORK DONE IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, AND SEVERELY CURTAIL THE ABILITY TO MEET OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY. THE MAJOR PROJECT WORK REQUIRES FREQUENT TRIPS OUT OF CARACAS. AT THE SAME TIME, ONE OFFICER MUST BE IN CARACAS TO KEEP UP WITH RAPIDLY MOVING EVENTS HERE AND BRIEF AND ASSIST U.S. BUSINESSMEN COMING TO THE EMBASSY TO PURSUE MAJOR PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES. ACCORDINGLY WE WOULD URGE THE DEPT TO RECONSIDER THE REDUCED STAFFING DECISION AND AUTHORIZE AN ADDITIONAL OFFICER (FSO-5) AND TWO LOCAL EMPLOYEES (ONE SECRETARY, ONE COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST) FOR THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION.

3. WE WOULD ALSO NOTE THAT ELIMINATION OF TWO OFFICER POSITIONS WOULD REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF THE 1979 COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM WHICH WAS PLANNED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THESE OFFICERS WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CAMPAIGNS 1 AND 4. CROWLEY

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CARACA07379
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780324-0864
Format: TEL
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780889/aaaacwkq.tel
Line Count: 83
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 66310467-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 197954, 78 CARACAS 202, 78 CARACAS 11476
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1809234
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STAFFING OF EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION
TAGS: AFSP, BEXP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/66310467-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014